



MAINE STATE ARCHIVES

Collection Development Policy

I. CORE MISSION

The purpose of the State Archives is to make the operations of state and local government more efficient, more effective and more economical through records management by preserving and providing access to the public the permanent historical records of Maine in our custody.

Maine's historical records are among the most important historical and cultural resources belonging to the people of Maine. These records allow the people of Maine to benefit from knowledge of state affairs, and preserve its records of permanent value for study and research.

These unique, irreplaceable records are essential to ensuring the rights of citizens and organizations and understanding the responsibilities and limitations of a transparent government.

II. PRIMARY FUNCTIONS

1. Appraise, collect, organize, describe, make available, and preserve primary and secondary resource materials emphasizing the documentation of Maine's history.
2. Provide adequate facilities for the retention and preservation of such records.
3. Make available to the public for research and study the use of state records.
4. Share research and information concerning the documentary heritage of the State of Maine.
5. Implement records management by formulating policy and procedures that will ensure the collection and preservation of state and local government archival materials.

III. GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

The Archives collecting area is comprised of sixteen counties. These counties are Cumberland, Franklin, Piscataquis, Somerset, Aroostook, Androscoggin, Sagadahoc, Kennebec, Lincoln, Knox, Hancock, Waldo, Washington, York, Oxford and Penobscot.

IV. SUBJECT SCOPE

A goal of the Archives is to acquire primary source materials that document regional life and the development of the State of Maine. These records are maintained to provide access to the historical research needs of the general public, students, and scholars. These records are also intended to contribute to and enhance the educational mission of the Maine State Archives.

V. ACQUISITION OF HISTORICAL MATERIALS

Archives materials are normally acquired in the following manner:

Donation - The Archives encourages donation of materials which are brought into the Archives, and actively solicits the donation of particular materials. The Archives policy encourages the donation of materials that are in keeping with the subject scope of the Archives collection. Gifts of materials with mixed historical values may be accepted if the Archives has the right to discard or otherwise remove unwanted items. The Archives reserves the right to decline donations which carry stringent donor restrictions. The Archives will determine that the donor has the authority to make the donation, and that the donation is not encumbered by ethical or legal challenges. All donations shall be represented on a donor form that includes a description of the materials; name, address, and signature of donor; date of donation; description of any restrictions attached with the donation, and a signature of an Archives representative accepting the donation. ****The Archives does not accept newspapers or published books (handwritten-ledgers are accepted).*

Transfer of Custody - Custodial transfer is the means by which most state records are acquired by the Archives. Custodial transfer applies only to records in which legal custody has transferred from one office to another. Visit Archives' website, under Records Center, for information on records transfer procedures for official records to the Records Center.

(<http://www.maine.gov/sos/arc/records/>)

VI. ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS

The Archives provides universal access to its historical records. Exceptions may be made for historical material identified as closed to public access as stipulated in the donor agreement. Exceptions may also be made for official State government records closed to public access as stipulated by law, Archives policy, or the appropriate records retention and disposition schedule. Because official State government records are public records, access to closed records may only be granted following the submission of a letter from the Commissioner of the record-creating agency or the expiration of the closed record time period. Visit the following link to review exceptions to FOIA requests,

<http://legislature.maine.gov/legis/statutes/1/title1sec402.html>.

The Maine State Archives reserves the right to deny access to archival documents or collections of documents to the public if the condition of a collection is deemed too fragile for handling. These documents may be available for viewing in electronic format.

VII. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS AND UNDERSTANDINGS

The Archives seeks to work cooperatively with private and public organizations engaged in the identification, acquisition, and preservative of historical primary sources. The Archives will refer donors or potential donors with collections that do not fit within the guidelines of this collection policy to a more appropriate repository. Exceptions will be made for collections of significant historical value that cannot be accepted or maintained adequately by a more appropriate repository. This decision will be made jointly by the Archives and a representative of the alternate repository.

VIII. DE-ACCESSIONING

The final disposition of official State government records without continuing value will conform to the established records retention and disposition schedules and the Archives' policy on Archives and Records Management.

Recognizing that the Archives may face resource and space limitations, the Archives will periodically review acquisitions to determine whether they should remain within the Archives' historical collections. Should the Archives determine that a collection warrants de-accessioning; the State Archivist will propose a recommendation for de-accession to the Maine Archives Advisory Board, and, upon concurrence by the Board, will seek to revert custody and ownership to the donor or the donor's heirs, or transfer custody and ownership to another repository, prior to authorizing the collection's destruction.

IX. COPYRIGHT

Materials transferred to the State Archives become the sole and absolute property of the State of Maine. All rights, title, and interest in and to these materials, along with any literary property rights that the donor(s) possesses, are transferred to the State. The Maine State Archives may reproduce, manage, display, conserve, and dispose of such materials as deemed appropriate.